THE STAGES
OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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I have not, in fact, prepared a formal lecture. Following the suggestion of Prof. Menon, I thought I might tell you something about the work we have been doing in the Centre for Inter national Studies at M.I.T. M.I.T., now just over a century old, has become one of the leading centres for science and technology in the United States. I am often asked how it is that there has been a fairly strong development of social science interest at such an institution. It is perhaps not irrelevant to the problems of public administration to say a word about this, at least public administration as it is practised by universities. The principle involved seems to be interesting.

Just after World War II, the administration of M.I.T. discovered that many of its leading graduates, within a very short period of time after graduation, were no longer performing as line engineers: that is, the technical training in engineering, which they had received, was only one rather small part of their professional life. They discovered, in fact, that a huge proportion of the graduates of M.I.T., within 10 years of their graduation, held posts of policy and administrative responsibility—posts linking technical engineering skills with a huge variety of other skills. M.I.T. graduates were charged with building roads in Turkey; or prospecting for oil in Iran; or running giant corporations, both public and private; or directing governmental agencies. In all this, their engineering skill was only one element of the skills they required.

Accordingly, many of these M.I.T. graduates were asked what they would have liked to have studied while at M.I.T. that they did not have an opportunity to study. Back came such responses as: "If only I had learnt that it was possible to run a government in a different way from ours and still have a reasonable government, that would have helped me a great deal. It took me years to discover that governments did not need to be like ours to work fairly well."

It was a fairly honest presentation of how narrow the education of American engineers had been—without an understanding

of the structures of societies, their economies and politics, the cultures and religions of the world. Accordingly, administration of M.I.T. decided to build a fairly strong social science programme with an appropriate faculty and staff: one which should be strongly oriented towards international and comparative studies. In connection with this decision, the Centre for International Studies was created just a dozen years ago. In 1950, after some years of preparation and discussion, it was decided that the Centre would focus its activities not only on international studies, but specifically on the problems of the underdeveloped areas. Nobody ever calls them that any more. They are now Developing Areas, New States, and Reviving Cultures. They are many things; but they are certainly no longer underdeveloped areas to us or to themselves.

Since 1950 a series of studies was undertaken which were fairly technical studies of economic development. There was a large programme financed by the Ford Foundation, known as the "three I's"—in which the I's represented Indonesia, India and Italy (particularly the south of Italy). The effort was made to understand how technical assistance, capital loans and various types of economic aid could help an economy rapidly to induce a process of self-sustaining economic growth. In some sense, the most conspicuous success of those studies was the discovery that technical economics did not contain sufficient answers to these questions—that it was not by the loan of skilled persons, nor by the provision of machinery, nor even by the supply of capital that a process of economic growth could be sustained.[1]

Accordingly, another series of studies was launched which was oriented more towards social change. What happens in a society to impede economic development? And what elements in a society facilitate economic development? To deal with such questions, several members of our Centre for International Studies undertook a fairly major effort to educate ourselves sufficiently so that we could design studies to deal simultaneously with problems of economic development, social change and political equilibrium in a large psycho-cultural framework. That gives you in one whole sweep the crux of the social sciences and the effort was perhaps excessively ambitious. But this is what several

1. M. F. Millikan and W. W. Rostow, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (Harper, 1957).

of us tried to do.[2]

A dramatic case is that of Prof. Everett E. Hagen, the well-known economist, a man who had proved his capacity in technical economics by playing the national income game with the best of economists, and sufficiently sure of his standing in the profession. He devoted very nearly 10 years of his life to the serious re-training of his own mind in psychology and sociology and he became, in effect, a social scientist rather than an economist.[3] Another Centre person with natural gifts in this direction was Prof. W.W. Rostow, whose work many of you are doubtless familiar with. He is an all-things-in-one-brain sort of scholar, historian, economist, high-level amateur psychologist and anthropologist as well.

The studies made by these and other Centre scholars reflect much that has happened, and has been happening, in the world over the last 12 years.[4] It is unusual to claim that a short period of 12 years has been historically very significant. Yet, when I think back to 1950 when we started these studies, the world looked very different from how it looks today. In that year, 1949-50, President Truman announced the Point-Four Programme. This now looks to us like rather simple-minded policy-making—even though we thought of it as a very dramatic innovation then. Technical assistance in that limited sense no longer seems uniquely important, but at that time it seemed like a bold new step forward.

In 1950 was coined a phrase which we repeated over and over again during the past decade, i.e., the "revolution of rising expectations". It now seems to us, in 1962, that we may face over the next dozen years something—pardon me if I sound pessimistic—that is rather a "revolution of rising frustrations". Many factors have intervened in this. One of these is the continued bi-polarisation of world politics, division of the world between a Russian Bloc and an American Bloc. This bi-polar conflict, having become nuclear, now puts all the world on the brink.

2. Lucian W. Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building: Burma's Search for Identity* (Yale, 1962).

3. Everett, E. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change: How Economic Growth Begins* (Dorsey, 1962).

4. *See* the periodic "List of Publications" issued by the Centre for International Studies, M.I.T.

Brinkmanship may be one way of describing Mr. Dulles' diplomacy or, as *The Times of India* did this morning, Mr. Khrushchev's methods in Cuba. But surely the diplomacy of brinkmanship, where the stakes of conflict include nuclear war, has introduced tremendous anxiety all over in the world among developed and developing nations. This was not true in 1950. It is very much with us in 1962.

The second change is the increase in the membership of the U.N. from 60 odd in 1950 to 106 in 1962. All of these new states are bringing with them a new nationalism which, within the framework of a bi-polar nuclear world arena, presents a number of problems. But there we are: a huge growth of new states acting as national entities, acting as though they were in the 19th century instead of the 20th. They have learnt to initiate, rather than avoid, the errors of the nations that kept the centre of the stage much too long. Their emergence in this form has created dramatic and fundamental conditions that any thinking about social change, economic development and political equilibrium in the developing world must take into account.

Finally, there is a new recognition, just from the experience of these rather difficult dozen years, that the inducement, planning and programming of balanced change in a society is just a much tougher matter than we had bargained for. It takes more doing than we had thought. None of the simple remedies by itself is enough, yet all of them need to be woven in. This problem of interweaving is the one that students of public administration are most concerned with. Why is it so difficult to accomplish rapidly a sequence of planned and programmed changes?

Having posed the question in that dramatic way, let me hasten to say I do not have the answer. However, I can tell you along what lines some of us at M.I.T. have been studying this problem and trying to get at least partial answers. If you forgive me, I will say a word about my own studies in the Middle East first, then speak briefly of Mr. Rostow's analysis of the "stages of growth", and finally mention a common effort we have made at our Centre.

All of the senior research staff participated in a study which was published a year or so ago, called *The Emerging Nations.*[5]

5. M. F. Millikan and D.L.M. Blackmer, eds., *The Emerging Nations* (Little Brown, 1961).

This represented certain common agreements that we had reached through our own studies in various parts of the world about a framework for thinking about the problems of development. That framework is parallel to one which I used in my Middle Eastern studies and also to Rostow's framework. You will find it used, in one way or another, in most of the books written by people at our Centre.

One element is the conception that the traditional societies of Africa and Asia are breaking down in some significant way. They are becoming different qualitatively from what they had been and they are moving in a common direction. They are moving in the direction that we characterise as modern. These ideas are loose. The labels are extremely general and hence rather ambiguous. Yet, if you specify them too much, you find that you have squeezed out much of what you meant to include. So there is a tremendous problem of defining just what one means by the traditional social structure, and what one means by modern social structure, in ways that guide research and analysis.

In our own work, I think we have reached a general agreement on some of the most significant characteristics of traditionalism as a way of life and as a system of society. We think of it as including, as its major characteristics, a dependence on authority. Authority plays a major role in the decision-making process of the society at all levels. We think of it as characterised by rootedness. People tend to die where they were born and to live their intervening lives in that same spot. Along with rootedness comes, on the level of personal psychology, the element of constriction. That sounds worse than it is meant: Constriction is that unawareness of alternatives which is characteristic of people who live, grow up and finally die in the same place, exposed to the same people and the same ways of doing things, without much opening in alternative ways of belief or behaviour.

Another characteristic of traditional society that is associated with these three major characteristics, in our judgment, is the dominance of the male, whether it be in a technically patriarchical form or some other. The cultures of traditional societies are, very largely, what have been called "male vanity cultures". The vanity of the male is a major item in deciding the criteria of taste, judgment and so on. It is the wise elders to whom

deference is paid.

Hence the related characteristic of age-orientation. The older men are the source of wisdom, knowledge and guidance. In traditional societies, it is understandable why this should be so. In these societies people grow up without opportunities for learning through schools, mass-media, or books (since illiteracy is the rule). Traditional communities tend to be isolated from each other, and education is limited to a very few. In such societies, experience is really the only teacher of wisdom, and it therefore seems natural that age should be regarded as the source of wisdom and that the elder males, as repositories of codified experience, should run the show.

For the rest of the society this male gerontocracy tends to reinforce the elements of constrictedness, rootedness and deference to authority, which we have mentioned. The isolation of the individual means that he is not involved in the life of his society. There is no pull on him to participate in public affairs. His life is highly private, or privatised, and the general rule of wise conduct is to mind his own business. All these "inertial" characteristics have made traditional societies operate as routinizing systems. The son in such societies is usually his father's shadow: a man's place in the world is defined by his birth. He is his father's son in every significant way.

This changes very dramatically when a traditional society begins to break down. One moves in the direction of modernism as a style of life. This we characterise by the opposites, or at least the contraries of the characteristics I have just mentioned. In a modern society, even where there are some traditional elements, there is a great deal of personal autonomy rather than deference to tradition. A person is much freer to make up his own mind on a large variety of issues, which would be regarded as *not* his business in a traditional society. A modern person is not rooted where he was born, but mobile. In fact, in most modern societies, most people do not die where they were born and this changes a great many things in life. If a person does not expect to die where he was born, then everything from religious rituals to expectations about occupation and success, from vertical mobility to the forms of respect and deference—all these matters begin to change.

In such a society first of all, young people emerge. Youth

takes on an autonomous set of behaviours of its own, which may be very different from the preceding generations. With youth, of course, young women also tend to emerge into the larger society and play autonomous roles. In this kind of society, a person develops rather rapidly the sense that the public business *is* in some significant way his business; that he participates in the decision-making process of his society. One participates, or becomes involved, by "caring" about what goes on, i.e., by having some affective or emotional involvement; also by "knowing" something about what is going on, i.e., by acquiring information through schooling, through the press, through conversations and discussions, and finally by making his own judgments about what is going on and "having opinions".

In this sketchy view that I have outlined, the meaning of public opinion becomes rather a dramatic one. The process of having opinions—the feeling that it is proper for a person to have opinions on public matters which formerly were regarded as not his business—is a very moving thing inside of a person that changes him much.

Having created these "ideal types" of a modern society and a traditional society, most of us at M.I.T. have been studying the transitional cases—those which are moving from one ideal type to the other ideal type. Recognizing that ideal types are meant to clarify through exaggeration what it is that you are looking for, we do not take these ideal types too seriously. When we come to the transitional cases which interest us, it is the process by which they move from one set of characteristics in the direction of another, that interests us. However, we are agreed at M.I.T. and I think that the force of the case is perhaps obvious that the direction of change in our times is unilateral. We do not find the so-called modern societies becoming traditional. We only find traditional societies modernizing. Hence, if we take this notion seriously, we reason that it should be possible to characterise the stages or the phases in which movement in the direction of modernity occurs and here is where we have made perhaps our most serious efforts to state criteria of the modernization process which will enable us to check the speed of movement and the balance of change within a society as it goes along.

In my own case, I found it necessary, in dealing with six countries in the Middle East, to distinguish three levels of the transitional process.[6] I call them, in order to remain neutral in the labelling, simply A, B, and C. A is more advanced, B less advanced, and C least advanced in the stages of modernization. Since I was operating with a sample interview survey which had asked a lot of people a lot of questions, I was able to use certain indices that would not be available to somebody working with census data or with economic aggregates. For the type of analysis I made, one needs to have data on the individual as the unit of observation.

One of the most significant things that divided modernising from less modernising or least rapidly modernising Turks—or Egyptians or Syrians, or Lebanese, or Jordanians, or Persians—was precisely the criterion of "having opinions". In the interview schedule we used, respondents were asked to express opinions on a variety of questions from "soup to nuts". We found, of course, that a large number of them had *no* opinions on many of the questions that we asked. On our view that "having opinions" is a defining characteristic of a modernising person, we differentiated the people in our survey according to the number and variety of opinions they gave. We sorted them out just this way. Those who answered 90% of our questions were ranked No. 1. Those who answered less than 10% were ranked 5. Then we assigned ranks 2, 3 and 4 for those who clustered around 75%, 50% or 25%. Thus we arrived at an operational definition that enabled us to rank-order respondents in terms of the frequency and variety of opinions.

We next asked ourselves what are the factors that differentiate these rank-orders from each other, i.e., what it is that distinguishes a Turk who has many opinions from one who has few, or one who has none. After trying out, in a crude empirical way, the dozen or more characteristics we had on each individual, we found that the best "fit" was given by four characteristics. We could properly account for the distribution of opinions among the respondents by just these four characteristics; by adding any more we got so small an improvement in our accounting scheme that it was uneconomical to use them.

6. Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Free Press, 1958).

These four characteristics were literacy, urbanism, media participation and what I call, empathy. If you look at these for a moment, you will see what the force of them would be. Think particularly of the Middle East, which is a relatively less advanced area of the world, in which there are many built-in obstacles to modernization. Literacy, for example, in the Middle East is a privilege of something less than 20 per cent of the populations. There are differences. Lebanon, for example, is far more literate than Egypt; Syria far more than Saudi Arabia. But by and large, the general level of literacy in the area during the period 1950-55 was restricted to a very small fraction of the population. (We take into account those who went to Koranic schools and learnt to repeat the Koran by rote, but did not learn how to read it or how to connect the sounds with meanings.)

Think here of the conditions in which urbanism represents not only an ecological or demographic index, but also an economic index. Urbanisation, historically, has been the process by which industrialization occurred. Industrialization was carried on in the cities. Urbanism in the Middle East effectively differentiates among the rank-orders of our respondents on the "opinion range". Those who were exposed to urban living systematically tended to know more, or care more, or at least have more opinions about public matters as compared with the rural people.

The third factor was media participation. This we found, even when we got into the rural regions, to differentiate sharply between people living in the same village or small town. Those who regularly exposed themselves to the newspapers, or the radio, or indeed even to the movies, had a much greater sense of alternatives in all the departments of life than those who did not. That is, if you have two illiterate people living in the same village, and one exposed himself to the radio and the other does not, the first person has many more opinions about things around him than the other. What is it that explains this?

To answer this, we located in our material another factor which we call empathy—by which we mean psychic participation. This was tested in our material by sorting out our interview schedule some nine projective questions. One of these asked people: "If you were the President of Turkey, what would be your

policy?" This is a projective question in the sense that it asks a person to imagine himself in a role or situation which is not his real one. We also asked such questions as these:

—"If you could not live in your country, where would you want to live?"

—"What are the greatest problems facing people like yourself?"

In the latter, the demand of the projective question was: How does a person classify himself? How does he define "people like himself"? It was quite surprising how many people in the Middle East could not do this. Many thought of themselves as Muslim but everyone else is Muslim. Or, one is a native of this village but everyone else around there is. It was very difficult for many of them to deal with such a concept as "people like yourself"—putting themselves into a category with "some" people that would exclude "others".

When we scored them on these projective questions, we found that they differentiated very well between our rank-orders. People who otherwise looked much the same—illiterate, impoverished villagers—differentiated themselves very well by their capacity to project. People who could imagine themselves in a situation different from the real one expressed more opinions on all public issues, as compared with those who could not make this imaginative projection.

Having done this for the Middle East, the question next arose: how general is this phenomenon? Which of these factors appear to shape the modernizing process in other countries? Hence we next did a study based on aggregate U.N. data on its 73 member countries. We could not test anything like an opinion-range or empathy, since we had no questionnaires. But we tested the other three factors—literacy, urbanism and media-participation—and we added a fourth one on which there were statistical data. This factor was political participation, defined as the average proportion of population voting in national elections (using the figures on the last five elections).

Our assumption was that, in a stable society, these four factors should maintain an equilibrium relationship. Its levels of urbanisation, literacy, media participation, political participation should be in a determinate relationship. For very many countries, this turned out in fact to be so. One could predict

quite well a country's level on the other three factors from its level on any one. But we focussed on the exceptions, because they bring us up to the critical problems of modernization at the present time. On media participation, for example, India was away ahead of where it should be according to its literacy and urbanisation rates. On looking into this, we discovered that, by 1956, India was already well on the way to becoming the world's leading producer of feature films, which it now is. One would not, from the other indices of India's economic level and modernization level, have forecast this. Similarly, in political participation, as you all know, India is well ahead of where it should be according to this equilibrium hypothesis. Japan, which is on a more advanced level across the board, nevertheless is out of phase in the sense that it is not "entitled", statistically, to be the world's leading consumer of he daily press.

Such exceptions alerted us that we were using a model of developmental growth based, in fact, on the history of the West. What we had as a model reflected how the western countries developed and modernised. The exceptions also alerted us that a lot of countries in the world, or if not a lot, at least some very significant countries, were going to break the rules of western history, or at least were going to try to break the rules. We had no notion whether the rules of western history are, in fact, rules of history, or accidents of certain times and places, and we were not prepared to assume anything about that. However, it was at this point that we were faced with the question: To what extent is the historical evolution of the West a useful model for describing and evaluating and predicting the modernisation of the non-West?

It was at this point that Prof. Rostow produced his fascinating work on the stages of history.[7] Many of you know how he characterised his five levels. Prof. Rostow spoke of the 'traditional society', from which it all starts. Then he specified three degrees of transition in a time order: 'the pre-conditions for growth', that is, establishing those minimum conditions essential for growth; next, the 'take-off' as he calls it, that point at which growth has reached the level that enables it to become self-sustaining. Growth becomes assured because, as he puts it,

7. W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, 1960).

'compound interest is built into the economic mechanism'. You always get back increasingly higher rates in terms of what you put in. Next comes the stage Rostow calls 'the drive to maturity'. Finally, the economy attains the stage of 'high mass-consumption'. In the history of the West, typically, it took roughly 60 years, or two generations, for a country to move from one Rostow stage to the next. In each country, a debate had to be settled among economists, officials, and other public administrators responsible for the framing and execution of policy. These debates revolved around a number of issues which are surely familiar to you here: the amount of central and public control over the economy versus the degree of autonomous and private enterprise that would be permitted; whether one was going to encourage the development of "leading sectors" or try to maintain "equilibrium growth" at all times. Issues of this kind were hotly debated in all the western countries during these stages of modernisation.

The issues that interest me the most—and are most relevant to the model of modernisation outlined earlier—concern the transportation and communication industries. These interest me because of the hypothesis that the primary condition of modernization is mobility—i.e., people must be able to move about, and be uprooted from their native place on earth. The transport and communication sectors of the economy have the most direct bearing on the sociological process of mobility. Since it is now the case, in most newly modernising societies, that transportation and communication are in the public sector, this seems to me a change of some importance from the history of the West. Accordingly the pattern of western development, which favoured the private sector, cannot serve as a directly usable model. The situation has been dramatically altered.

To what extent education, as it developed in the West during the 19th century, is a useful model, I will leave that to you. You are familiar with the fact that, relatively early in the 19th century, began the legislation of free and compulsory public education which rather rapidly, in the space of a generation or two, transformed a society like the United States. In those European countries which remained, by comparison with the United States, rather traditional (for example, France), a great deal of stagnation became apparent in French economy and society culture during

the second half of the 19th century and persisted into the 20th. I think much of the revolutionary kind of transformation that took place earlier in the United States is now taking place in France, and to some extent in Britain, because of the revisions of the Educational Acts of those two countries. I invite you therefore to consider these three factors, from the sociological point of view and from the administrative point of view, as basic issues for the developing countries today. These are: (1) transportation, the ease of physical mobility; (2) communications, the mass media, which are conveying to large numbers of people (i.e. "the masses") ideas about styles of life other than they have ever known; and (3) education, which is the more disciplined instruction of people in alternate ways of living to the ways in which they were born.

I have no policy conclusions to offer. I simply outline the problem as I see it, on the basis of studies made by my colleagues and myself.

The process was described in our collective book entitled *The Emerging Nations*. In that book, three general sequences were outlined for the whole process of shaking loose from traditional society and entering into the process of modernisation. The first was the intrusion on a traditional society of some outside force, whether by imperialism, or by a war, especially a disastrous defeat in war. In some sense an external force intrudes upon the traditional society and winds up by disrupting it—as most imperialisms have disrupted the countries which they occupied, as most catastrophic defeats in wars have disrupted these societies. There comes a period in which some rethinking and reshaping of oneself and one's society takes place. Finally, there comes an emergence of initiative in some field or other. One of our colleagues, Prof. Hagen, has studied, in a half-dozen different societies at different periods of history, the emergence of the entrepreneur, the person with initiative in the economy. Under what conditions does he arise, what sort of person is he, what skills does he typically bring to bear upon the resources of the country? The emergence of initiative and effort has also been studied by a Harvard psychologist—effort in the sense of achievement, orientation towards achieving and the building of institutions which reward achievement. This is David McClelland's *The Achieving Society*, a book which many of you would be

interested to read.[8]   We have, therefore, the first major step in the process of recovering from intrusion and disruption—the period in which Rostow's "pre-conditions" are being built. There emerges, in one sector or another of society, initiative based on a sense of achievement which is rewarded.

Once the process takes this turn, there comes the building of consensus on new basic values.   This is possibly the most complex and difficult of all tasks.   It seems to me that, in many of the developing societies in which I have had any first-hand experience, it is this which represents the major obstacle and hurdle.   Even in a country like Syria—where initiative is fairly well developed and diffused through the society, where even the Syrian peasant is relatively willing to try new agricultural methods, where he can count on a reward roughly proportionate to his achievement, and where he operates in relatively free economy—there is virtually no sign of any consensus on basic values that are appropriate to a society in this stage of development.

It is the difficulty of achieving consensus, and the prevalence of dissensus among different groups, in modernizing societies that seems to me the most difficult problem of all. Having no solution for it, but having mentioned it, I had better stop at this point.
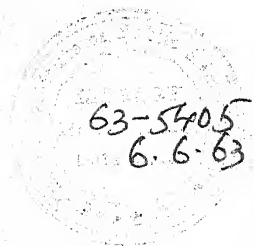
8.   D.C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (Van Nostrand, 1961).